

The problem of suicide on children and pupils in Japan

by

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Abstract

Inquiring into the movement of tendency to suicide in Japan from the sex and the age.

I explain the special feature of suicide in Japan with regard to problems of suicide in each stages of children, examinees, undergraduates and the old age compared with those of the other nations.

I express my view of this problem from the sociological and the educational points of view.

The movement of suicide in Japan and the international comparison

The death rate from suicide before the war was twenty persons per one hundred

Table 1. The death of suicide rate (per 100, 000 population)

Age		Suicide		Age		Suicide	
		Death	Death rate			Death	Death rate
1902	M35年	8,059	17.9	34	9	14,554	21.3
03	36	8,814	19.4	35	10	14,172	20.5
04	37	8,966	19.4	36	11	15,423	22.0
05	38	8,089	17.4	37	12	14,295	20.2
06	39	7,657	16.3	38	13	12,223	17.2
07	40	7,999	16.9	39	14	10,785	15.1
08	41	8,324	17.4	40	15	9,877	13.7
09	42	9,141	18.8	41	16	9,713	13.6
10	43	9,372	19.1	42	17	9,393	13.0
11	44	9,373	18.8	43	18	8,784	12.1
12	T 1	9,475	18.7	47	22	12,262	15.7
13	2	10,367	20.2	48	23	12,753	15.9
14	3	10,902	20.9	49	24	14,201	17.4
15	4	10,153	19.2	50	25	16,311	19.6
16	5	9,599	17.9	51	26	15,415	18.2
17	6	9,254	17.1	52	27	15,776	18.4
18	7	10,101	18.5	53	28	17,731	20.4
19	8	9,924	18.0	54	29	20,635	23.4
20	9	10,630	19.0	55	30	22,477	25.2
21	10	11,358	20.0	56	31	22,107	24.5
22	11	11,546	20.1	57	32	22,136	24.3
23	12	11,488	19.8	58	33	23,641	25.7
24	13	11,261	19.1	59	34	21,090	22.7
25	14	12,249	20.5	60	35	20,143	21.6
26	S 1	12,484	20.6	61	36	18,446	19.6
27	2	12,845	20.8	62	37	16,724	17.6
28	3	13,032	20.8	63	38	15,490	16.1
29	4	12,740	20.1	64	39	14,707	15.1
30	5	13,942	21.6	65	40	14,444	14.7
31	6	14,353	21.9	66	41	15,050	15.2
32	7	14,746	22.2	67	42	14,121	14.2
33	8	14,805	22.0	68	43	14,601	14.5

(Ministry of Health and Welfare)

thousand, but it decreased during the war to 12.1, the minimum in 1943. It increased year after year; from 1947 (it went up to 15.7 then.) after the war and reached 25.7, the peak in 1958, but after that it decreased year after year and finally it dropped to 14.5 in 1968.

Table 2. The death rate of suicide compared with international from age in 1967. (per 100, 000 population)

Nation Age	Japan	U.S.A	Aust- ralia	Czecho- slovakia	Den- mark	Fin- land	France	Ger- many	Hun- gary	Italy	Swe- den	England wales
total	14.1	10.8	22.4	23.9	17.5	20.0	15.5	21.3	31.3	5.4	21.6	9.8
5~14	0.3	0.3	0.4	1.5	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.0
15~24	12.7	7.0	12.0	19.2	7.3	11.9	5.7	12.3	21.8	3.3	12.0	4.8
25~34	16.8	12.4	19.5	26.1	15.6	21.8	12.1	20.5	29.4	3.8	23.6	8.5
35~44	12.1	16.6	26.9	27.9	24.7	30.3	16.5	25.6	38.1	5.4	29.4	11.3
45~54	15.4	19.5	33.7	33.6	34.5	39.4	26.0	34.4	45.1	8.3	38.3	14.8
55~64	25.7	22.4	40.8	36.2	34.1	41.9	34.3	39.1	48.7	12.0	34.7	18.5
65~74	43.0	19.8	43.0	48.3	29.4	33.2	32.2	34.0	57.4	13.2	29.5	20.0
75~	70.2	21.3	46.6	65.0	26.8	21.8	37.4	39.1	93.1	15.5	27.9	14.2
total	16.1	15.7	32.6	34.8	23.6	32.3	23.3	29.5	45.1	7.8	31.9	11.7
5~14	0.4	0.5	0.5	2.3	0.3	0.5	0.2	1.0	1.1	0.3	0.6	0.1
15~24	13.6	10.5	18.6	27.4	10.2	17.8	7.6	19.2	32.6	4.0	16.6	6.2
25~34	20.3	17.2	31.6	41.0	21.4	33.5	16.8	30.0	46.4	5.0	33.5	11.5
35~44	15.0	22.9	42.6	45.1	33.5	51.5	25.1	35.8	58.9	7.6	43.5	13.8
45~54	18.6	27.5	48.3	52.4	46.9	67.6	41.5	49.1	67.3	12.1	55.6	16.8
55~64	33.0	34.4	62.8	52.4	46.7	68.0	54.7	58.7	68.5	17.6	53.3	22.8
65~74	50.7	32.9	68.5	67.0	39.7	69.8	54.9	48.5	82.4	22.7	47.2	25.2
75~	77.6	42.8	76.5	109.2	42.2	55.3	77.1	63.6	147.7	30.1	48.8	29.3
total	12.1	6.1	13.4	13.5	11.6	8.5	8.0	13.9	18.4	3.2	11.4	8.0
5~14	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.6	—	—	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.2	—
15~24	11.7	3.5	5.1	10.8	4.3	5.8	3.8	5.2	10.7	2.5	7.2	3.4
25~34	13.4	7.6	7.0	10.9	9.7	9.7	6.9	10.2	13.1	2.7	13.1	5.3
35~44	9.3	10.7	12.9	11.3	16.1	9.7	7.7	16.0	18.4	3.3	15.2	8.7
45~54	12.7	12.1	23.0	16.1	22.4	16.1	11.1	23.7	25.6	4.7	20.8	12.9
55~64	19.1	11.5	23.9	21.8	22.3	21.3	16.0	24.9	31.5	6.8	16.8	14.7
65~74	36.3	9.4	26.2	34.9	20.9	9.7	16.1	24.4	38.7	6.0	14.4	16.4
75~	65.5	6.4	31.0	40.0	15.1	5.2	18.4	25.1	58.5	5.8	12.3	14.3

(World Health Statistics Annual 1967 vol. I)

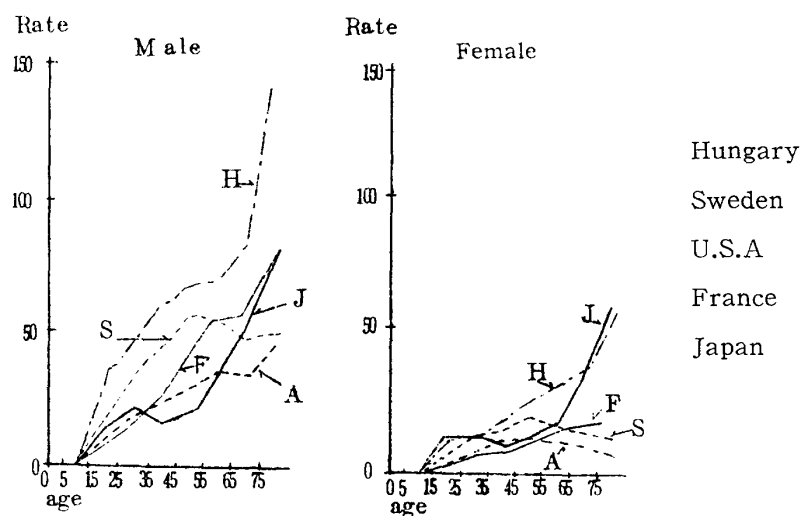


Fig. 1. The death rate of suicide compared with international from age (1967).

As this diagram shows, it is obviously that the decrease of late years is in the young generation rather than in the old generation.

In Japan, it is a special feature that there are many suicides in both man and woman of the young generation. The death rate from suicide in the old generation is higher than that of many other countries, but this tendency marks in woman.

Suicide in children

The death rate from suicide in children isn't higher than that of many other countries.

It is between zero and three per one hundred thousand in the ten to fourteen year old category. It is very low compared with the adult. We should notice that severe scolding has a deep significance in the direct motives of a suicide and that home environment is related to this motive.

The double suicide of parent and child is directly influenced by Japan's traditional ideals related to the conventional family system in which a person is sacrificed for his home. Often a lack of personality and poor living conditions are also contributing factors.

Suicide in highschool students and examinees

A person is likely to think that abstract ability, measured by a scoring system, is his total ability and consequently regard himself as superior or inferior as a result.

He is discouraged by reason that his friends become rivals, and superiority or inferiority develops between them. The uneasy, the isolation, the inferiority and the big hope of parents are therefore problems in suicide of this age.

Suicide in undergraduates

Disobedience to the essential ideology of university and human estrangement of teacher

Table 3. The suicide rate in student (per 100,000 all students) in 1957~1959

Classification		Sex	Death	Attempted
University	National	Male	38	17
		Female	24	12
	Public	Male	30	23
		Female	24	24
	Private	Male	21	24
		Female	14	12
Junior college		Male	19	21
		Female	14	23
Total		Male	29	13
		Female	18	16

(Kōsaka & Usui; Suicide in Japanese)

by learning are considered as the main causes. Then complications are likely to be caused between an ideal and a reality from the self-awaking.

Suicide in the old age

The isolation caused by illness and the consciousness of a ruined man in society caused by insecurity of living are related to the suicide. Many old men live apart owing to the collapse of family system. There are many problems such as the opposition between parent and child, the age-limit retirement and the uneasiness of his declining years. The death rate from suicide in woman is very high, though the adaptability of men and women is different, upon which the consciousness of predominance of man over woman exerts a serious influence. The social welfare policy is required exceedingly.

The characteristic in Japanese society and suicide

There is a social characteristic behind many problems of suicide.

In point of family organization, home is emphasized rather than individual conventionally.

As this family system disturbs the consciousness of the individual, it is difficult for a person to grow up with the attitude of independence. Therefore the relation of positional dependency and the immaturity of social consciousness spring up.

In human relationships, there are two opposite complications of an age class related to actions and human observation. There is conventionally the class-consciousness and the relation to government-dependency, upon authority. (the centralized organization)

Moreover there are transitional problems from the conventional Japanese social organization to the modern social foundation.

Education and suicide

We have to think the matter through to the bottom, though the remedy of impotent personality and the establishment of a Suicide Bureau are also required. The organized training system for men of talent in education and the abstract scoring system drive students to suicide. Education should lead to the state which cultivates the original possibilities of human nature and at the same time help him to deal with a critical situation.

It will be the power of education that the growing young men who can't adapt themselves to a change in social conditions cultivate the ability of adaptation. The adaptation is a positive one which changes the environmental conditions, working upon them. It is now demanded that education develops a cultured man who can establish himself, choosing his own destiny.

Table 4. The cause of death and death rate from sex and age.

Sex	Order Age	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
Male	total	A 25.1	B 17.2	C 11.2	D 8.3	E 4.3	F 3.8	G 3.8	H 2.3	I 2.2	J 2.0
	0	E 15.0	L 14.9	M 13.2	P 10.2	R 7.0	K 5.1	S 4.4	D 3.9	Z 3.6	C' 2.0
	1~4	D 46.2	E 9.9	M 7.8	B 6.9	K 5.2	N 3.0	T 2.8	V 1.9	U 1.5	C' 1.2
	5~9	D 47.8	B 9.0	E 6.3	M 5.9	N 4.4	Q 2.9	U 2.7	V 1.9	X 1.7	T 1.5
	10~14	D 32.6	B 11.9	N 6.0	E 5.6	Q 3.3	M 4.9	U 4.8	X 3.6	C 3.3	I 2.0
	15~19	D 49.3	I 10.2	B 7.4	N 4.0	C 4.0	Q 3.9	E 3.0	M 1.5	U 1.5	A 1.1
	20~24	D 46.1	I 14.6	B 6.6	Q 5.0	C 4.3	N 2.2	V 1.9	E 1.5	A 1.4	U 1.2
	25~29	D 38.1	I 15.4	B 7.8	C 6.3	Q 5.1	A 2.4	G 2.1	V 2.0	N 1.7	E 1.5
	30~34	D 31.3	B 11.0	I 9.7	C 7.5	A 6.2	Q 4.6	G 4.2	J 2.6	E 1.6	Y 1.4
	35~39	D 24.4	B 14.1	A 10.8	C 8.4	I 6.4	G 5.4	J 4.8	Q 3.0	Y 1.9	D' 1.7
	40~44	D 18.7	B 18.4	A 15.0	C 8.7	G 5.5	J 5.1	I 4.4	Q 2.4	Y 1.9	E 1.4
	45~49	B 22.3	A 18.4	D 14.7	C 9.5	G 5.7	J 4.5	I 3.4	Y 2.2	Q 2.0	E 1.3
	50~54	B 26.0	A 22.5	D 9.6	C 9.5	G 4.9	J 4.5	I 2.9	Y 2.0	Q 1.8	E 1.6
	55~59	B 27.4	A 25.4	C 11.1	D 6.9	G 4.4	J 3.7	I 2.0	Y 1.8	E 1.8	A 1.4
	60~64	A 29.1	B 26.8	C 11.7	D 4.5	G 3.8	J 2.6	E 2.4	Y 2.0	H 2.0	I 1.6
	65~69	A 32.2	B 24.3	C 12.1	G 3.4	D 3.3	E 3.2	H 2.5	J 2.0	Y 1.8	X 1.6
	70~74	A 34.7	B 19.6	C 12.5	E 4.3	G 3.1	H 3.0	D 2.4	F 2.2	X 1.9	Y 1.8
	75~79	A 34.0	C 13.9	B 13.8	F 5.9	E 5.8	H 3.7	G 2.5	X 2.1	D 2.0	Y 1.7
	80~	A 27.1	F 17.7	C 15.3	E 7.9	B 6.7	H 3.9	K 2.4	X 2.0	D 1.6	G 1.4
Female	total	A 25.9	B 16.3	C 12.5	F 8.2	E 4.3	D 3.1	H 3.0	I 2.0	K 1.8	G 1.8
	0	E 15.9	M 14.5	L 12.6	P 10.6	R 7.6	S 4.3	K 4.3	D 4.2	Z 3.9	C 1.8
	1~4	D 36.1	E 12.8	M 9.9	B 7.0	K 4.4	T 3.6	V 3.3	N 3.0	U 1.8	X 1.2
	5~9	D 33.2	B 10.9	M 9.3	E 8.5	N 5.5	U 3.3	V 2.8	T 2.2	C 2.2	K 1.6
	10~14	D 17.0	B 15.1	E 7.9	N 7.5	M 7.0	C 5.5	Q 5.0	U 4.3	B' 1.7	A 1.6
	15~19	I 16.5	D 16.0	B 11.9	C 6.7	Q 6.1	N 4.3	E 4.0	M 3.2	A 2.7	U 2.3
	20~24	I 21.2	D 12.3	B 10.4	C 7.0	O 6.6	Q 5.9	E 3.1	G 2.8	N 2.6	A' 2.4
	25~29	I 16.8	B 15.2	O 10.6	C 8.0	D 7.0	Q 5.8	G 4.4	A 3.3	E 2.9	U 2.0
	30~34	B 23.6	I 10.5	C 8.5	O 7.9	D 7.1	G 6.3	Q 4.0	A 3.9	E 2.0	N 2.0
	35~39	B 29.7	C 9.7	G 7.4	A 6.4	I 6.2	D 5.8	Q 3.8	O 3.5	E 2.2	N 1.9
	40~44	B 33.5	C 10.6	A 10.3	G 6.7	D 5.6	I 4.8	Q 3.4	N 2.1	E 2.1	J 1.9
	45~49	B 35.9	A 15.1	C 11.0	G 4.5	D 4.5	I 3.5	Q 2.7	J 2.3	U 2.0	E 1.8
	50~54	B 34.9	A 20.4	C 10.7	D 3.6	G 3.1	I 2.8	J 2.5	Q 2.1	E 1.9	H 1.5
	55~59	B 32.3	A 25.0	C 10.9	D 3.0	G 2.5	I 2.3	J 2.2	E 2.1	Q 2.0	H 1.8
	60~64	A 29.1	B 28.5	C 11.8	D 2.4	E 2.4	G 2.2	H 2.1	W 2.0	J 1.9	I 1.9
	65~69	A 33.0	B 23.0	C 12.7	E 3.0	H 2.9	D 2.1	W 2.0	G 1.9	I 1.7	J 1.6
	70~74	A 35.7	B 17.6	C 13.7	F 4.0	H 3.6	F 3.1	D 1.8	W 1.6	G 1.5	K 1.3
	75~79	A 35.1	C 14.3	B 11.3	F 8.3	E 4.9	H 4.5	K 2.2	D 1.6	X 1.4	Q 1.2
	80~	A 26.4	F 23.6	C 15.0	E 6.8	B 4.7	H 4.3	K 3.1	X 1.4	D 1.3	Y 1.0

(Ministry of Health and Welfare)

A. Brain blood disease	K. Gastraenteritis	U. Tumor
B. Malignant tumor	L. Birth	V. Murder
C. Heart disease	M. Congenital abnormal	W. Diabetes mellitus
D. Accident	N. Central nerve disease	X. Asthma
E. Pneumonia	O. Disease at birth	Y. Peptic ulcer
F. Senility	P. Immature foetus	Z. Disease newborn at pregnancy
G. Tuberculosis	Q. Hepatitis	A'. Liver disease
H. Hypertension	R. Disease of newborn	B'. Appendicitis
I. Suicide	S. Hemorrhagic disease of newborn	C'. Intestinal obstruction
J. Liver cirrhosis	T. Measles	D'. Mental disorder